P1, wherein the isolated immunologically active amino acid sequences of P1 and P2 are immunologically equivalent; and

(b) detecting any binding between the antibody and both of the peptides P1 and P2, thereby detecting the presence or absence of the antibody in said sample liquid.

REMARKS

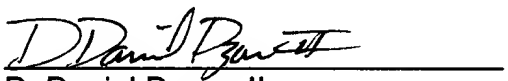
Claims 29-49 are pending in this application. Claims 29-44, 48, and 49 have been allowed. Claims 45-47 have been rejected.

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesy extended to counsel during the telephone conference of August 7, 2001. It is believed that the subject of the discussion is reflected in the amended Claim 45 above, and that the amended Claim 45 should lead to allowance of Claims 45-47.

Claims 45-47 have been rejected because they do not specifically state that the two antigens, P1 and P2, are different. Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 45, as amended, is fully responsive to this rejection, and Applicant requests that the rejection be withdrawn because the amended Claim 45 now clearly states that P1 and P2 are different, as the marker group of P2 is distinct from the solid phase binding group of P1.

In the event this paper is not timely filed, Applicant hereby petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fee for this extension may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 01-2300, along with any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper.

Respectfully submitted,



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Enclosures: Marked Up Copy of Claims
Notice of Appeal
Check # 323832 in the amount of $310.00 (Appeal Fee)
Petition for Extension of Time (3 months)
Check # 323831 in the amount of $890.00 (EOT Fee)

MARKED UP COPY OF CLAIMS

45. (Amended) A method of detecting the presence or absence of an antibody against hepatitis C virus in a sample liquid, the method comprising the following steps:

(a) incubating said sample liquid which may contain an antibody against hepatitis C virus with two peptides P1 and P2, wherein the peptide P1 consists of (1) an isolated immunologically active amino acid sequence from the hepatitis C virus consisting of 6-22 amino acids from one of SEQ ID NOs: 12-16; (2) an immunologically inactive spacer region coupled to the immunologically active sequence; and (3) a solid phase binding group; and the peptide P2 consists of (1) an isolated immunologically active amino acid sequence from the hepatitis C virus consisting of 6-22 amino acids from one of SEQ ID NOs: 12-16; (2) optionally, an immunologically inactive spacer region coupled to the immunologically active sequence; and (3) a marker group <u>which is (a)</u> coupled to the spacer region <u>and (b) distinct from the solid phase binding group of P1, wherein the isolated immunologically active amino acid sequences of P1 and P2 are immunologically equivalent</u>; and

(b) detecting any binding between the antibody and both of the peptides P1 and P2, thereby detecting the presence or absence of the antibody in said sample liquid.